

REMARKS

Regarding the Claims:

Following this Amendment, respectfully submitted in response to the Official Action mailed 03/28/2002, claims 1-2, 4-13, and 15-20 remain pending in the Application.

Without waiving the applicability of the earlier Remarks presented by applicant in previous prosecution-related responses, Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitation of former claim 3. Claim 3 now stands canceled without prejudice. The Examiner had advised applicant in the prior Official Actions that said claim 3 was objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but that it would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. By incorporating the limitation of claim 3 within base claim 1, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 1 is now allowable and such action is courteously solicited.

With regard to claim 18, the Examiner has rejected said claim 18 under 35 USC § 103 in view of FRAGALE '174. It is noted, however, that claim 18 depends from previously amended and *allowed* base claim 12. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that all claims dependent from allowable claim 12, including claim 18, are patentable under the doctrine established in *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ.2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988), which holds that dependent claims are patentable if the claims from which they depend are patentable. Accordingly, the Examiner is requested to withdraw

said § 103 rejection of claim 18 in view of the allowability of independent claim 12.

Applicant respectfully submits that the independent claims of record (nos. 1, 12, and 20) are now allowable, and that the remaining dependent claims are also therefore allowable. *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ.2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988).

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1-2, 4-13, and 15-20 are in condition for allowance, and such action is courteously and earnestly requested at this time.

Attorney Change of Address

The Examiner is respectfully requested to take note of, and, if necessary, to enter, a change of correspondence address of the undersigned attorney for the applicant. A Change of Correspondence Address document is enclosed herewith for the Examiner's reference and entry.

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CONCLUSIONS

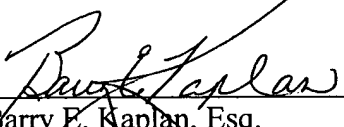
The aforementioned claims, as amended, are supported by the original disclosure as filed by the Applicants and, thus, do not add new matter to the above-referenced application.

This Response is submitted as, and believed to be, a full and complete response to the Office Action mailed on August 19, 2003.

The Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner's consideration, approval, and entry of the above amendments. In that claims 1-2, 4-13, and 15-20 are believed to be allowable, issuance of the present application is respectfully solicited in light of the above amendments to the claims and these Remarks, which have been responsive to the referenced Office Action.

Should there be any questions or concerns in this responsive amendment, the Examiner is invited to telephone Applicant's undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted, this 19th day of December, 2003,



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